

Virginia CELCP Scoring Criteria – FY 2011

This document describes the scoring system that the Virginia CELCP Evaluation Committee will use to review and rank projects. These criteria are amended from the national CELCP scoring criteria and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation's scoring criteria. Each project should be evaluated on its own merit (not in comparison to the others) and given a score for each measure. All scores awarded by evaluators will be averaged and proposals will be ranked by their total score. The top three proposals will be submitted to the national competition on April 9, 2010.

The maximum score that a project can receive is 100, summarized as follows:

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SCORING SYSTEM

I. Primary Purpose (Ecological Values and Threat)		0 – 30 points
a1) Ecological value (Virginia CELCP priority focus areas).	(0 – 20 points)	
a2) Contribution to the protection of ecological values.	(0 – 10 points)	
b) Threat of conversion.	(0 – 10 points)	
II. Secondary Purposes		0 – 20 points
a) Conservation value.	(0 – 8 points)	
b) Recreational value.	(0 – 6 points)	
c) Historic and cultural value.	(0 – 3 points)	
d) Aesthetic value.	(0 – 3 points)	
III. Technical/Scientific Merit		0 – 20 points
a) Manageability of the site.	(0 – 6 points)	
b) Long-term use of the site.	(0 – 8 points)	
c) Project readiness.	(0 – 6 points)	
IV. Qualifications of the Applicant(s)		0 – 10 points
a) Ability to acquire land.	(0 – 5 points)	
b) Ability to manage the site.	(0 – 5 points)	
V. Project Costs		0 – 15 points
a) Land acquisition costs.	(0 – 6 points)	
b) Matching funds.	(0 – 6 points)	
c) Other costs.	(0 – 3 points)	
VI. Other Specified Factors		0 – 5 points
a) Coastal resiliency.	(0 – 5 points)	_____
MAXIMUM SCORE		100 points

I. Primary Purpose (Ecological Values and Threat) (0 – 30 points)

a1) Ecological Value (Virginia CELCP Priority Conservation Areas). (0 – 20 points)

Proposed projects that fall within Virginia's CELCP Priority Conservation Areas will be scored higher than those that do not. Coastal GEMS can be used to map a proposed project within the priority areas (www.deq.virginia.gov/coastal/coastalgems.html) to view the project's potential ranking in this category. If you would like a copy of this data coverage or need assistance mapping your project location within the CELCP Priority Conservation Areas please contact Virginia CZM Program GIS Coordinator, Nick Meade at nick.meade@deq.virginia.gov.

These mapped areas (Figure 5, Virginia's *Draft* CELCP Plan) were selected through their ability to protect ecological values such as species diversity, habitat quality, linkages with ecological corridors or unfragmented habitat, water quality, habitat for threatened and endangered species, and ecosystem functions (see Section II-C of Virginia's *Draft* CELCP Plan for a description of the state ecological assessments which were used to create Virginia's CELCP Priority Conservation Areas). Projects should address a protection need and describe the rarity of natural heritage and wildlife resources targeted for conservation (Global and State ranks and WAP Tier). Projects should also convey the degree to which the natural heritage and wildlife resources on the property are currently protected, not protected, or inadequately protected on public or private conservation lands.

How well does the project rate for ecological purpose?

- Imperative opportunity.....20 points
- Extremely high opportunity.....18points
- Very high opportunity.....16points
- High opportunity14points
- Moderate opportunity.....12points
- Does not fall within Virginia's ecological priority areas..... 0 points

The Virginia CZM Program recognizes that a proposed projects may not fall entirely within one Ecological Value level (imperative, extremely high, very high, high, or moderate opportunity), or may lie *directly* adjacent to or *partially* within a Priority Area without being inside the mapped bounds. Projects such as these will be brought before the Evaluation Committee. The Committee will collectively determine the appropriate score for this criterion based on the applicant's description of the resources and values to be protected, and how priorities as defined in this CELCP Plan are addressed.

a2) Contribution to the protection of ecological values. (0 – 10 points)

(*A project will only be scored using this measure if it does not fall within the Virginia CELCP Priority Conservation Areas)

A project is still considered eligible even if it occurs outside of the Virginia CELCP Priority Areas (Figure 5). A score will be given based on an applicant's description of the contribution a project may make toward the protection of ecological values (as described above in a1).

How well does a project contribute to the protection of ecological values?

- Significant contribution.....7 - 10 points
- Moderate contribution..... 4 - 6 points
- Limited contribution..... 1 - 3 points
- No contribution..... 0 points

b) Threat of conversion. (0 – 10 points)

Threat of conversion will be evaluated by the degree to which the property is threatened by conversion from its natural or recreational state to other uses. Applicants should describe local/regional development trends or current development pressures in the project area, a site's development potential based on local zoning or development plans and/or regulatory agencies, and imminent actions pending, such as whether or not the current owner has expressed an interest in developing or received an offer to develop the parcel. Threat of conversion will also be evaluated against the Virginia Vulnerability Assessment Model. This model is a growth prediction model that shows areas at greatest risk of being lost or degraded due to urban and suburban sprawl and other types of development. The model is used here to identify potential risk of conversion of Virginia's ecologically important natural landscape to an urban or suburban use. Coastal GEMS can be used to determine the predicted vulnerability of a project to conversion pressures. Applicants should provide a description of any imminent actions pending or local/regional conversion trends as they relate to the proposed project. See Section II-D for more information on the Vulnerability Model.

To what degree is the property threatened by conversion from its natural or recreational state to other uses?

- High.....4 – 5 points
The proposed tract has received a purchase offer, or has development plans approved by a local governing body and regulatory agencies.
- Moderate..... 2 – 3 points
Regional development trends are high, the property is on the market (listed for sale), and development plans have gone to local governing bodies and regulatory agencies for approval
- Low.....0 – 1 point
Regional trends don't indicate much of a threat, the site is not readily developable, and if the site has potential for development, plans have not been made for the property.

To what degree may the property be at risk of being lost or degraded due to urban or suburban development and sprawl? (Scores based on 'Threat Value' in the Virginia Vulnerability Model)

- Very High (Threat Value 7 or 8).....5 points
- High (Threat Value 6).....4 points
- Moderate (Threat Value 5)..... 3 points
- Low (Threat Value 4).....2 points
- Limited (Threat Value 3).....1 point
- Minimal (Threat Value 1 or 2)..... 0 points

II. Secondary Purposes (0 – 20 points)

Strong proposals will document multiple public benefits to be gained from the long-term protection and management of the proposed property. These benefits may be protection of more than one type of resource on the property, such as ecological resources, historical resources, or recreational resources. Other benefits such as connection of the property to other conserved areas as part of a coordinated conservation planning strategy, community education, research, or access to coastal resources will also strengthen a proposal.

This factor evaluates proposals by their conservation value, historic/cultural values, and recreational/aesthetic values, or secondary purposes. Applicants are encouraged to fully describe how their project will protect or enhance these values within their proposals in order to maximize their score for this section.

a) Conservation Value. (0 – 8 points)

This criterion evaluates whether acquisition of the property supports the goals of federal, state, regional or local conservation plans and resource protection plans identified in this CELCP Plan, even if it doesn't exhibit high ecological value (such as regional or local conservation corridors, buffers, setbacks), or is likely to support ecological values if restored. Is the site(s) adjacent to or in close physical or functional proximity to other conservation lands and would it expand the protection of natural heritage or wildlife resources, and multiple conservation goals? The applicant should describe how the project fits within a larger conservation plan, strategy, or initiative as designated by either a government or non-governmental entity and is strategically linked to enhance previous conservation investments (public and private). Excerpts from conservation plans or resource protection plans, and/or maps showing strategic linkage of the site(s) to existing conservation lands should be included within the application where appropriate.

How well does the project meet the conservation goals of the Commonwealth?

- High..... 6 – 8 points
Meets landscape-scale, multi-state or regional, goals and acquisition priorities; occurs within a SAMP boundary; provides a corridor connection for heritage and wildlife resources of exceptional quality as identified in a regional or local conservation corridor plan
- Moderate..... 3 – 5 points
Meets goals and acquisition priorities identified in a local conservation plan or focused conservation strategy; has the potential to provide corridor connections
- Low..... 1 – 2 points
Site is not a significant conservation candidate or conservation elements are not present
- None..... 0 points

b) Recreational Value. (0 – 6 points)

This criterion evaluates a project's contribution to coast-dependent or nature-based recreation, including priority needs identified in this CELCP Plan, and the degree to which the property will be accessible to the public. The applicant should describe how the site(s) expand and protect state recreational interests (as identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan) or supports local and regional plans for parks, open space, or other recreational interests.

How well does the project meet the recreational goals of the Commonwealth?

- High..... 5 – 6 points
Provides excellent opportunity for access to coastal resources, particularly in areas of high need (water access or geographic location with limited public lands available for recreation)
- Moderate..... 3 – 4 points
Provides access or recreational opportunities on a portion of the site, or on a seasonal basis; recreation and public access opportunities exist, but the need is not high
- Low..... 1 – 2 points
Access is limited due to protection measures needed for threatened or endangered species; easement purchase allows limited public access to the site
- None..... 0 points

c) Historic and Cultural Value. (0 – 3 points)

This criterion evaluates whether a project contains significant historic, cultural, or archaeological features, particularly those related to use of the coastal environment, giving priority to sites listed in or eligible for a national or state register of historic places. Preservation of the resource may complement or enhance other cultural or historic resources or preservation activities, or represents a unique cultural resource opportunity within the geographical area. Protection or preservation of the resource may further other public interests, such as education, research, recreation, heritage tourism promotion.

- High..... 3 points
Preserves a significant national historical, cultural, or archaeological features that are designated as a National Historical Landmark or Virginia Historical Landmark, or area listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Virginia Register of Historic Places; represents a unique cultural resource opportunity in a geographic area
- Moderate..... 2 points
Preserves resources that have potential for designation as a National Historical Landmark or Virginia Historical Landmark, or area listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Virginia Register of Historic Places; contributes to the integrity, enhances the setting, or provides a buffer for a property that is listed on the Register
- Low..... 1 point
The site contains evidence of features that have not been formally evaluated to receive designation, or the site does not have evidence of historically or culturally significant features.
- None..... 0 points

d) Aesthetic Value. (0 – 3 points)

This criterion evaluates whether project protects sites adjacent to, or in the viewshed of, areas designated as scenic byways or scenic rivers, or other state or locally designated cultural landscapes.

High.....	3 points
<i>Scenic vistas present throughout the year; complements nationally designated scenic programs (such as American Heritage Rivers)</i>	
Moderate.....	2 points
<i>Scenic vistas are seasonal or limited; complements Virginia's Scenic Rivers, Scenic Roads and Byways; supports local or state scenic route, trail, or water trail programs</i>	
Low.....	1 point
<i>Limited scenic or aesthetic quality at time of purchase although restoration potential may exist</i>	
None.....	0 points

III. Technical/Scientific Merit (0 – 20 points)

This factor ascertains whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Projects will be reviewed and ranked according the degree in which they can be effectively managed and protected over the long-term (in terms of land stewardship and/or restoration) to conserve their ecological, conservation, recreational, historic and cultural, or aesthetic values and can be executed within the performance period.

a) Manageability of the site. (0 – 6 points)

To what degree can the site be effectively managed and protected over the long-term to conserve its ecological, conservation, recreational, historic and cultural, and aesthetic values?

High.....	4 – 6 points
<i>Land is currently in the desired state consistent with the intended purpose(s), (e.g. land with ecological value does not require restoration, control of non-native species, or remediation), and surrounding land uses are compatible with long-term protection of the site's values.</i>	
Moderate.....	2 – 3 points
<i>Current condition of the site is consistent with protection goal but has some impacts, such as from previous management activities, non-native species, etc., and will require some active management or minor restoration to achieve the desired state.</i>	
Low.....	0 – 1 points
<i>Land has been converted or actively managed historically in a manner not consistent with long-term conservation goals and/or contains hazardous materials or contamination that have not been removed/remediated. Restoration will be necessary and arduous.</i>	

b) Long-term use of the site. (0 – 8 points)

To what degree are proposed long-term uses of the site compatible with long-term conservation or the site's ecological, conservation, recreational, historic and cultural, or aesthetic values?

- High.....6 – 8 points
Proposed uses of the site (or portion of site being acquired with CELCP funds) are compatible with the primary purpose for which the land is being protected and will maintain or improve the ecological, conservation, recreational, historic, or aesthetic values present on the site.
- Moderate..... 3 – 5 points
Existing uses will be continued or new activities are proposed on the site that are generally consistent with the primary purpose for which the land is being protected, and will not result in additional impacts to the values present on the site or result in conversion of lands from their natural or recreational state to other uses.
- Low..... 0 – 2 points
Existing or proposed uses of the site may (or are likely) to result in additional impacts to the values present on the site or conversion of lands from their natural or recreational state to other uses.

c) Project Readiness. (0 – 6 points)

Does the project have clearly stated goals and objectives that can be achieved during the performance period?

- High..... 4 – 6 points
Site(s) have been identified, negotiations with landowner have resulted in purchase/sale agreement; survey, appraisal, title opinion, and other documentation have been completed.
- Moderate..... 2 – 3 points
Site(s) have been identified, property is on market and/or discussions with landowner are likely to result in a purchase/sale agreement; appraisal, title opinion and other documentation can be produced within award period.
- Low..... 0 – 1 points
Preliminary contacts with landowner have been made and discussions are underway; or site has uncertainties (willingness to sell, litigation, or other liens or judgments, etc.) that are not likely to be resolved within the award period.

IV. Qualifications of the Applicant(s) (0 – 10 points)

This evaluation factor ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. Specifically, applicants will be evaluated according to the degree to which they can effectively manage over the long-term in terms of their capacity (staffing, resources, authority and expertise). Applicants will also be rated on their expected ability to complete the acquisition, and to manage the

property for long-term protection consistent with CELCP guidelines and Virginia coastal management program policies.

a) Ability to acquire land. (0 – 5 points)

Does the applicant have the proven capacity and/or experience, based on available funding, staff, authority and expertise, to execute the land transaction consistent with CELCP guidelines?

- High..... 4 – 5 points
CELCP recipient has funding, personnel, expertise, legal authority and demonstrated success for acquiring lands, or interests in lands, for long-term conservation purposes.
- Moderate..... 2 – 3 points
Funding or personnel appears to be limited; and/or state or local recipient appears to have a high caseload relative to resources
- Low..... 0 – 1 points
Applicant has not identified, or does not have, the personnel, funding resources, or authority to execute the project or to provide necessary assurances for long-term conservation.

b) Ability to manage the site. (0 – 5 points)

Does the applicant have the proven capacity and experience, based on available funding, staff, authority and expertise, to manage property for long-term conservation of coastal and estuarine lands consistent with CELCP guidelines?

- High..... 4 – 5 points
Applicant has funding and personnel or a partnership/stewardship agreement in place to manage new tract and has demonstrated success in managing other properties for conservation purposes, and has had success in monitoring and enforcing terms of easements. Applicant has satisfactory history with previous grants.
- Moderate..... 2 – 3 points
Funding or personnel appears to be limited; and/or state or local recipient appears to have a high caseload relative to resources; funding, partnerships or stewardship agreements have been tentatively identified.
- Low..... 0 – 1 points
Applicant has not identified, or does not have, the personnel or funding resources to accommodate the needed management of the tract.

V. Project Costs (0 – 15 points)

This evaluation factor determines if the project budget is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and timeframe. Specifically, the budget is evaluated to determine if land acquisition costs are based on an independent appraisal or other assessment of fair market value, if the source of matching funds is consistent with CELCP guidelines and is likely to be available within the performance period, and if direct and indirect costs for implementation of the project are reasonable and consistent with CELCP guidelines.

a) Land acquisition costs. (0 – 6 points)

Are land acquisition costs based on an independent appraisal or other assessment of fair market value? Do the costs account for any continuing streams of revenue derived from ongoing uses for the property or will such revenues be applied to long-term stewardship of the property?

Yes..... 4 – 6 points

Acquisition costs are based on a recent, independent appraisal by a qualified individual. Project costs account for continuing streams of revenue derived from ongoing uses of the property. Revenues will be applied to long-term stewardship of the property.

Somewhat..... 2 – 3 points

Acquisition costs are based on an informal assessment of fair market value. Proposal does not account for revenue from existing or anticipated use of the property.

No..... 0 – 1 points

Acquisition costs are not based on either an appraisal or other assessment of fair market value.

b) Matching funds. (0 – 6 points)

Are the sources of matching funds reasonable, consistent with CELCP guidelines (cash contribution, donated land or land value from properties with similar coastal and estuarine attributes, and in-kind services such as restoration), and likely to be available within the performance period? Are there any sources that appear inconsistent (such as Federal funds, funds previously used or proposed as match for another Federal grant)?

Yes..... 4 – 6 points

Source of matching funds has been identified, are consistent with CELCP guidelines, and will be available at the time of closing or by the end of the award's performance period.

Somewhat..... 2 – 3 points

Source of matching funds has been identified and appears consistent with CELCP guidelines, but it is difficult to determine whether costs are reasonable (e.g., value of in-kind services, inadequate documentation for donated land or land value). Matching funds are contingent on receipt of other non-Federal funding (such as state or local bond funds), agreement with owner of "donated land", or otherwise subject to uncertainty at the time of closing or by the end of the award's performance period.

No..... 0 – 1 points

Source of matching funds is not consistent with CELCP guidelines.

c) Other costs. (0 – 3 points)

If associated costs for executing the land transaction, such as appraisal, title opinion, site assessment, etc., are requested, do they appear reasonable for the scope of the project? Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel directly involved in implementing the proposed project?

Yes..... 2 – 3 points

Associated costs appear reasonable for the scope of the project; funds for administration are directly related to the project.

No..... 0 – 1 points

Direct costs appear high for the scope of the project; funds for administration do not appear to be directly related to the project.

VI. Other Specified Factors (0 – 5 points)

The Virginia CZM Program, as the lead agency for Virginia's CELCP, reserves the right to annually add additional evaluation criteria to the state scoring process. These criteria will be determined by the Coastal Policy Team and will be published with the annual Notice of Funding Opportunity. These criteria may reflect changes in the Governor's priorities, coastal zone management priorities, or to achieve a fair distribution of land protected throughout the Commonwealth's coastal zone.

a) Coastal resiliency. (0 – 5 points)

This criterion evaluates how resilient a property is to sea level rise and/or the degree to which coastal wetlands will be able to migrate inland, maintaining wetland ecosystem composition and function and an upland-wetland connection.

High.....4 – 5 points

The site contains sufficient upland areas that provide a migratory path for wetlands. The site may or may not have existing wetlands, but is connected to a coastal waterway and the potential exists for the creation of wetlands due to a rise in sea level.

Moderate.....2 – 3 points

The site is primarily upland that is not likely to be affected by projected sea level rise, but does not provide a migratory path for wetlands.

Low.....0 – 1 points

The site contains significant wetlands that may be inundated by projected sea level rise. The site does not contain upland areas that are sufficient to provide a migratory path for wetlands.